

REMARKS

Claims 1-27 and 30 have been examined. Claims 11 and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), and claims 1-10, 13-27 and 30 have been allowed.

I. Rejoinder of claims

Pursuant to Applicants' request on page 16 of the Amendment filed on April 7, 2003 ("Previous Amendment"), the Examiner has rejoined withdrawn claims 6, 9, and 10 to the present application and has allowed them. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's action.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 over U.S.P. 6,239,817 to Meyer ("Meyer")

Applicants submit that claim 11 is patentable over Mayer. For example, claim 11 states because the cited reference does not suggest the claimed hole, which is formed locally in the area of a platen and that the hole opposes less than the entire portion of a dot formation element array with respect to the secondary scanning direction.

On the other hand, as shown in Fig. 4B of Mayer, the hole 38 directly opposes the entire recording head 27. Thus, Mayer does not suggest a hole that opposes less than the entire portion of a dot formation element array as recited in claim 11.

III. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Meyer in view of U.S.P. 6,325,489 to Endo (“Endo”)

Claim 12 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meyer in view of Endo. Applicants submit that claim 12 is patentable over the cited references.

For example, claim 12 states that the recording head performs an interlaced recording operation for actuating one of the dot formation elements located at a position close to the end portion of all the dot formation elements when data are recorded on the end portion of the recording medium without leaving a margin. The Examiner acknowledges that Mayer does not teach the features above but contends that column 7, lines 25-35, of Endo does.

While Endo may arguably teach an interlaced printing operation, it performs such printing operation by staggering two groups of nozzle opening arrays from each other by at least two print pitches in the sub-scanning (i.e. secondary scanning) direction. For example, Fig. 1 of the reference shows four nozzle opening arrays K, C, M, and Y. The nozzle openings in the K nozzle opening array are spaced apart from each other by four print pitches in the sub-scanning direction. Similarly, the nozzle openings in the C, M, and Y nozzle opening arrays are spaced apart from each other by four print pitches in the sub-scanning direction. However, the nozzle openings in the K nozzle opening array are spaced apart from the nozzle openings in each of the C, M, and Y nozzle opening arrays by two print pitches in the sub-scanning direction. By staggering the K nozzle opening array from the C, M, and Y nozzle opening arrays by two print pitches, interlaced printing can be achieved as described in column 7, lines 25-35.

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However, Applicants submit that Endo's interlaced printing does not suggest the claimed interlaced recording operation that is performed by actuating one of the dot formation elements located at a position close to the end portion of all the dot formation elements when data are recorded on the end portion of the recording medium without leaving a margin.

IV. Newly added claims

Applicants have added new claims 33 -36.

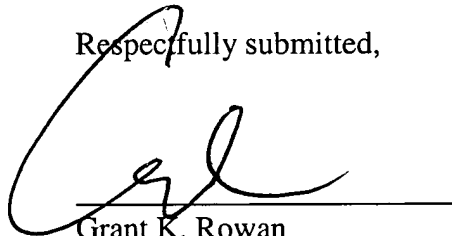
V. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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